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Wednesday March 19, 2008

## Project to assist drought-stricken farms

FRANKFORT - Gov. Steve Beshear and Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer have announced an \$8.15 million program to help Kentucky farmers affected by last year's drought.

The Kentucky Agricultural Relief Effort will be funded with master tobacco settlement money and administered by the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy.

KARE is designed to help producers pay for on-farm improvements and investments that will help reduce the impact of the drought. Farmers may seek funding for water projects, such as drilling, piping or hook-up to municipal water systems; forage projects; and other projects such as fencing, feeding equipment, animal waste handling equipment and crop insurance. Producers may apply to be reimbursed for eligible expenses retroactive to Dec. 1, 2007. Guidelines will be posted on the GOAP Web site, <http://agpolicy.ky.gov>, by close of business Monday.

One KARE fund totals \$6.15 million, of which \$4.1 million is from county tobacco settlement funds and \$2.05 million is from state tobacco settlement funds. Producers must submit applications for funding to their respective county KARE program administrators by Aug. 1. The chief executive officer of the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board, which oversees Kentucky's tobacco settlement funds, will award KARE funding for eligible projects.

Counties may apply for funding from a separate \$2 million statewide pool after they have committed all of their county tobacco settlement money. Funds from the \$2 million pool will be allocated based on a formula measuring the agricultural impact of last summer's drought.

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